

country into the German camp. The British reverses at the close of 1899 provoked schemes of European mediation, but they never had much substance. On February 28, 1900, Muravieff, the Russian Foreign [Minister, visited Paris and informed Delcasse that the Russian Government wished to make the Wilhelmstrasse declare itself by asking whether it did not think the time has come for a joint *demarche* in London in the interests of peace. Delcasse accepted the idea on condition that the Russian Ambassador at Berlin spoke in the name of Russia and France ; and he added that, if representations were to be made to England, it was indispensable to success that Germany should take the initiative. When the Russian Ambassador approached the German Government the Kaiser suggested that Russia should first inquire how a friendly intervention would be received in London, and added that, as it would be a long business, the intervening Powers should first guarantee each other's European territories for a certain time. Even a temporary recognition of the Treaty of Frankfurt was unthinkable, and the plan of joint mediation fell to the ground.

William II continued his advances, though a genuine rapprochement was at all times beyond his grasp. Germany patronized the Exhibition of 1900. In April, 1901, the French Government accepted a pressing invitation to co-operate in the Bagdad railway, on condition that Russia was admitted to the enterprise ; but the consent of Russia, who regarded the railway as an economic and political danger, was withheld. The conception of a Continental *bloc*, consisting of Germany, Russia and France, continued to haunt the Kaiser's restless brain, and the outbreak of the Japanese war found Berlin and Paris in the same pro-Russian camp. What more

natural, he
argued, than that France should enter a league
which would
guard Russia's flank during the conflict, and
defend Europe
against the maritime and commercial domination
of the Anglo-
Saxons ? Thus the Treaty of Bj6rk6, after being
discussed in
1904, was signed by the Kaiser and the Tsar in
July, 1905.
The invitation to France to join was never
officially made,
since the treaty involved the mutual guarantee
of frontiers.
Even had a guarantee formed no part of the
agreement, she
would have declined to share in an association
directed against
England, with whom she had by this time made
up her quarrel.
The European landscape was rapidly changing,
for France was
winning friends and Germany was losing them.